

**The Nineteenth Century Novel**  
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**Lecture - 30**  
**Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities Book II: Chapters 16-18**

Hello and welcome back. We are in week 7, we are looking at Chapters 16-18 from Book II. And in this section the key narrative instance would be the marriage of Lucie Manette to Charles Darnay, and its impact on the father. So we'll look at the incidents in the run-up to that event.

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The Fate of the Manettes

Puzzled about the truth of Barsad's testimony

"—And if it does come, while we live to see it triumph—I hope for her sake, Destiny will keep her husband out of France."

F.R.  
Lucie  
Dr Manette  
Charles Darnay  
Lucie Manette  
Deformed  
Peasantry's Marquis

Now, if you remember the earlier session in which I was discussing the presence of the Spy, John Barsad at the wine shop, he does give them an important information about the kind of impending marriage of Lucie Manette to Charles Darnay, and he also offers them significant information in the sense that he tells them that Darnay is related to Marquis Evremonde.

And Marquis Evremonde is responsible for the death of Gaspard, someone that they all know and sympathize with, because Gaspard was arrested for the murder of Marquis Evremonde and was put to death in a cruel fashion. So this would lead everybody to hate the Marquis even more than they already do, and once they hear about this piece of information from Barsad they are shocked as well as they are puzzled.

They wonder whether there is truth to Barsad's testimony, but we know as readers that there is, in fact a lot of truth to Barsad testimony. And Defarge is kind of saddened by this information because he realizes that, that this association, this association between Marquis Evremonde, the monster who was murdered by Gaspard, and Charles Darnay, the man that Dr. Manette's daughter is going to marry would kind of put Charles Darnay and Dr. Manette on the other side of two opposing parties that we have in this particular moment in the novel.

So we have the people who are against the Marquis, such as the Defarges, and then we have people who are, you know, the peasantry of France. So we have two opposing groups here, the peasantry versus the Marquis. The Marquis comes to symbolize all the aristocratic class, and this relationship that Lucie is going to forge with Charles Darnay puts Darnay and by implication Dr. Manette on the Marquis's side, and that is very unfortunate. Darnay and Lucie Manette.

So the Defarges are on the side of the peasantry; on the side of people who want to bring down the aristocrats and therefore, Defarge is upset that Darnay will also be implicated in the crime committed by the aristocracy as a big group; as a big class, and he is affected by this knowledge. And Defarge, Madame Defarge says that, if it does come, and that "it" is referring to the French Revolution; if it does come while we live to see it, I hope for her sake, Lucie's sake destiny will keep her husband out of France.


It is better for Charles Darnay to stay out of France rather than to come here, because if he comes he will be condemned, so that is the indirect message that Defarge offers here with, in her conversation with her husband.

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**Defarge's plea**

- "after all our sympathy for Monsieur her father, and herself, her husband's name should be prescribed under your hand at this moment, by the side of that infernal dog's who has just left us?"
- "Stranger things than that will happen when it does come," answered madame. "I have them both here, of a certainty; and they are both here for their merits, that is enough."

*Dr. Manette*  
*Raise sympathy for the family of Manette's*  
*Reasoning in faulty*  
*DARNAY = innocent*



And Defarge tries to plead for mercy; plead for some kind of understanding on the part of his wife. And here we do see a kind of a softer side to Defarge, and he says, “after all our sympathy for Monsieur her father and herself, her husband's name should be prescribed under your hand at this moment by the side of the infernal dog's who has just left us?”

So he is asking her a question and he says, you know, we did feel a huge sympathy for her father Dr. Manette and her daughter who also suffered as an orphan in the absence of her mother and father who was imprisoned in the Bastille for 18 long years, so we were very sympathetic towards this family.

And he says, that her husband's name, to be, to include her husband's name in that knitting register is not quite, you know, appropriate. So that is the indirect question that Defarge is trying to raise and it; would you not consider to leave his name out of your register, so that is the plea that Defarge has to his wife. And he says, it is not fair to have Darnay’s name alongside the name of John Barsad and other people who did commit heinous crimes such as Marquis Evremonde and other people who are associated with him; the aristocrats, the nobility who oppressed and suppressed the peasantry.

So that is the question of Defarge. And look at the response that Madame Defarge offers. She says, “stranger things than that will happen when it does come.” Stranger things than the name of

Barsad and Darnay being knitted together one after the other, you know, will happen; this is nothing, to have these two names together, it is nothing, things that are stranger will, more strange than this will happen and in France, when it does come when the revolution comes.

“I have them both here, of a certainty; and they are both here for their merits, that is enough.” And she says that, if Barsad's name is in my knitting register; if I have registered his name in my register, then he is here because of all the crimes that he did commit against the people of France and if Darnay is also there and he is there, absolutely because he has committed crimes; he has merits for being here and that is a very kind of awkward answer that we have.

The reasoning is not very, very clear because we know, the readers know, and other people in this story know that Darnay is absolutely innocent. And if he is innocent, how can he merit his place in the Knitting register, the register of death that Madame Defarge is knitting. The reasoning is not clear. It is skewed, reasoning is faulty.

But Madame Defarge think that there is a reason; her reason is that Darnay belongs to the race, the lineage, the family of Marquis Evremonde. And the Marquis Evremonde family is looked at as a unit, not as individual. So an individual represents the family and the family's faults are made responsible in the individual. So she has a different kind of reasoning, so the entire class is condemned; the class of aristocrat is condemned for the crime of certain people in that class.

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## Chapter 17: One Night

- "If I had never seen Charles, my father, I should have been quite happy with you."
- He smiled at her unconscious admission that she would have been unhappy without Charles, having seen him; and replied:
- "My child, you did see him, and it is Charles. If it had not been Charles, it would have been another. Or, if it had been no other, I should have been the cause, and then the dark part of my life would have cast its shadow beyond myself, and would have fallen on you."



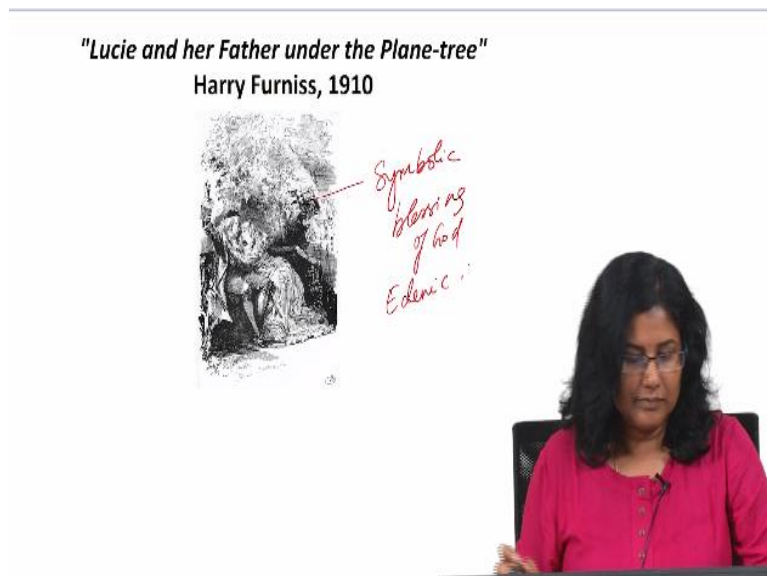
We come to Chapter 17, which is titled “One Night” and this night refers to the night that the father and the daughter talk about the past; talk about their aspirations out of life, and Lucie and Dr. Manette have a chat before the marriage of Lucie the next night, the next day. And she tells her father very innocently that, “If I had never seen Charles, my father, I should have been quite happy with you.’ And he smiled at her unconscious admission that she would have been unhappy without Charles, having seen him, and replied ‘My child, you did see him, and it is Charles. If it had not been Charles, it would have been another or if it had been no other, I should have been the cause and then the dark part of my life would have cast its shadow beyond myself, and which have fallen on you.’”

So Lucie is utterly innocent in the claim that she makes to her father which is that, if she had not seen Charles then she would not have thought about marriage at all, and the father who is more mature, who is the more experienced of the two says that if it is not Charles, it would have been somebody else with whom you would have fallen in love. This is natural. This is an expected, you know, path for you.

And if it had been nobody, then he says that, I would have been the reason behind your disruption of the romantic trajectory, the domestic trajectory, and that would mean that my dark past is affecting your bright future, and then I would have found fault with myself, I would have

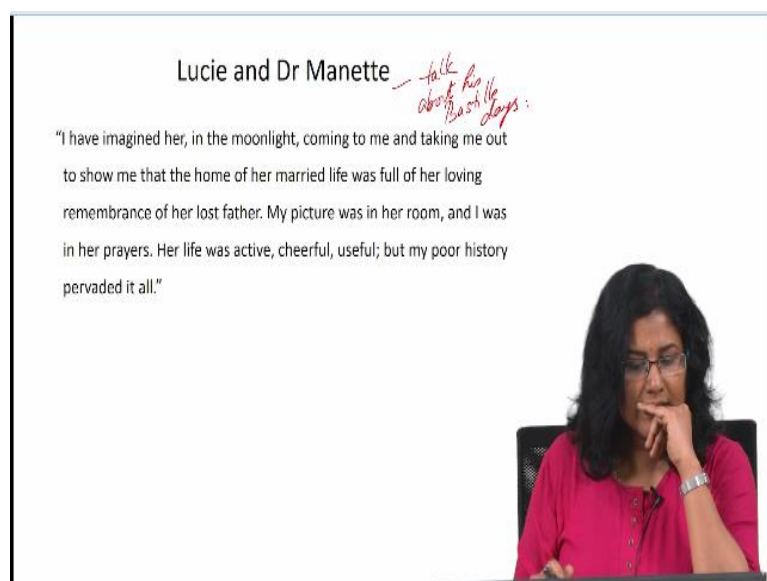
been guilty, and I would have been depressed. He says that, it is good and that he is glad that she is marrying Charles Darnay.

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And this is the illustration for that meeting that particular night before Lucie Manette would be married to Charles Darnay. So this is the scene that is, you know, presented in the illustration as taking place under the Plane-tree. The Plane-tree has a lot of symbolic significance, it has the blessing of God itself, it is almost edenic in the garden.

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And this scene is also very important because for the first time we have Dr. Manette talk about his past, which is his Bastille days, and he says that, when I was in prison I used to think about

your presence, I used to think about you taking me out of prison. So he says that, “I have imagined her, in the moonlight, coming to me taking me out to show me that the home of her married life was full of her loving remembrance of her last father. My picture was in her room, and I was in her prayers. Her life was active, cheerful, useful; but my poor history pervaded it all.”

So she says that, when I was in the Bastille, I used to imagine, you taking me out of prison and taking me to your home, your married home, and in your home I could see that my picture was there. And I could see that you led a very active, cheerful, productive life, but then my past, my history did offer a kind of a tinge of sadness to your life. So he almost envisions the present and the future of Lucie Manette in his past. So it is a kind of a fantastical scene here.

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Lucie and Manette

- “And she showed me her children,” said the Doctor of Beauvais, “and they had heard of me, and had been taught to pity me. When they passed a prison of the State, they kept far from its frowning walls, and looked up at its bars, and spoke in whispers. She could never deliver me; I imagined that she always brought me back after showing me such things.”

*Charles Dickens*  
*Fancy of Dr R at the Bastille*  
*Prison as a constant presence*

And he further says that, “‘And she showed me her children,’ said the Doctor of Beauvais, ‘and they had heard of me, and had been taught to pity me. When they passed the prison of the State, they kept far from its frowning walls, and looked up at its bars, and spoke in whispers. She could never deliver me; I imagined that she always brought me back after showing me such things.’”

So this is the fancy of Dr. Manette at the Bastille in his past.

So he says that, in my imagination, when I was in the Bastille, Lucie Manette my daughter did kind of show me her children, and sometimes the children when they passed by the prison, they

used to kind of move as far away from the prison as possible and they looked up at the bars, and they spoke in whispers.

And the implication is that they tried to see their grandfather who was there. And he says that, even though my daughter could, you know, take me out, she could not fully deliver me from this prison. So there are lots of themes here, which is that the prison is a constant presence. Even though you can step out of the prison now and then, you cannot get rid of its influence, you know, fully, so that theme is coded in this fantastical scene where Dr. Manette talks about his past.

And the other foreshadowing that we have here in the scene is the foreshadowing of Charles Darnay's imprisonment. Those of you who have read the novel would know that Charles Darnay will be imprisoned in France, and Lucie Manette would come to the street outside the prison and she would look up at its bars, hoping that Darnay would get a glimpse of her.

And sometimes she also brought her child with her, so that he could take a glimpse of both of them, so that foreshadowing of things to come is coded in this past scene of Dr. Manette. So it is a kind of a combination of the past and the future and the overall ideological perspective that we need to draw from this particular scene is that prisons are a constant presence in a Tale of Two Cities.

If someone is out of the prison, then there is always another person who would go in and people are always in prisons either metaphorically or literally. And the state is constantly controlling its citizens, so that is the ideological aspect that comes to mind when we read this excerpt.

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## Domestic household

- "The marriage was to make no change in their place of residence; they had been able to extend it, by taking to themselves the upper rooms formerly belonging to the apocryphal invisible lodger, and they desired

nothing more."

expand their home in the same place.



What are the changes the marriage would affect? Literally not much, not much because “the marriage was to make no change in their place of residence; they had been able to extend it by taking to themselves the upper rooms formerly belonging to the apocryphal invisible lodger, and they desired nothing more.” So they are not going to change their, Soho Square residence; they are just going to extend, expand their home in the same place. And how do they do it?

They are going to rent the upper rooms that were thought to have belonged to an invisible lodger. Somebody who was thought to stay there, they are going to take those rooms and they desired nothing more. There is hardly any change brought about by the marriage of Lucie Manette to Charles Darnay. Darnay would come to live with them, and that is it.

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## Chapter 18: Nine Days

- The door of the Doctor's room opened, and he came out with Charles Darnay. He was so deadly pale—which had not been the case when they went in together—that no vestige of colour was to be seen in his face. But, in the composure of his manner he was unaltered, except that to the shrewd glance of Mr. Lorry it disclosed some shadowy indication that the old air of avoidance and dread had lately passed over him, like a cold wind.

*Two Promises*

*Charles Darnay reveals his real identity*



This chapter is titled “Nine Days” and it is a very important chapter in the sense that for the first time we see the lapse of Dr Manette being there for nine days; it is not a momentary lapse, it is a prolonged lapse, and he goes back to the state of mind in which he was first found in the wine shop garret.

So why does that happen; why does the doctor suffer a relapse, and the reason is there in the conversation that Charles Darnay has with the doctor. So why does it affect him? Charles Darnay reveals his real identity. And the reader does not know it yet, this is a secret conference that the son-in-law and the father-in-law have in private.

So “the door of the doctor's room opened and he came out with Charles Darnay; he was deadly pale. He was so deadly pale, which had not been a case when they went in together, that no vestige of color was to be seen in his face. But in the composure of his manner, he was unaltered except that to the shrewd glance of Mr. Lorry it disclosed some shadowy indication that the old air of avoidance and dread had lately passed over him, like a cold wind.”

So we need a bit of context for this excerpt, which is that, if you remember the proposal scene, the chapter titled “Two Promises” where Darnay was about to offer him some information about his real identity, and the doctor refuses to let him proceed. He says that, do give me your

information when Lucie Manette has actually accepted his proposal, your proposal and that you get married.

He says that, tell me your news on the day of your marriage, and that day has come, and the doctor has had a conversation in private in his room with Darnay, and when he comes out he is deadly pale; he is so startled by the information that Darnay has offered, and there was no color on his face, but then he is able to compose himself.

There is composure yet, even though one can see that he is affected and Mr. Lorry is able to, you know, guess, able to guess, able to find out that Dr. Manette is affected by some news because there is a kind of a shadowy indication of the disaster, the relapse that is going to come indicated in his face.

There is an air of avoidance, he tries to avoid the glance of his friends, and it is as if he has recently been very much frightened, so all these facial cues are there in the visage of Dr. Manette. And his friend Mr. Lorry is able to notice all these clues. And he says that, it is as if there is a cold wind that has passed over his face, so that is how the third person narrator puts it, the impact that Dr Manette reveals on his face.

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Aftermath of Lucie's departure

- Miss Pross, with a terrified face, was at <sup>Mr Lorry's ear</sup> his ear. "O me, O me! All is lost!" cried she, wringing her hands. "What is to be told to Ladybird? He doesn't know me, and is making shoes."

Episode is kept a secret from Lucie

Mr Lorry and Miss Pross try to recover the mental health of Dr Manette

Lucie and Charles Darnay are married and then they go on their honeymoon, leaving the father behind. The father is supposed to join them after a few days, after a week or so, and Dr. Manette is left to the care of Miss. Pross and Mr. Lorry. And one day, Miss Pross notices that Dr. Manette is in his room making shoes, and she is shocked out of her life and she says, Miss. Pross with a terrified face, was at his ear, at Mr. Lorry's ear.

“O me, O me! All is lost!” She cried, wringing her hands, 'What is to be told to Ladybird? He does not know me, and is making shoes.” What has to be told to Lucie? How am I going to talk to Lucie, my ladybird? He is, you know out of his senses, he is making shoes as he used to do when he was in the Bastille; when he was in the wine shop garret.

So he has suffered a great relapse and a both Mr. Lorry and Miss. Pross decided to keep this a secret from Lucie, and they, you know, between the both of them they keep a guard over Dr. Manette, they tried to talk to him, they tried to act quite normally and they try to get him out of his, you know, mental depression; and they decide not to inform Lucie about the relapse that Dr. Manette has suffered.

And they decide to recover the mental health of Dr. Manette, you know, before she arrives, before Dr. Manette is going to join the two of them in their journey. Thank you for watching, I

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